CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1   1.   A method, comprising:

2   receiving a request for an information object at an address identified by a uniform resource

3   locator (URL); and

4   mapping the URL to a corresponding unicast address for the information object.

1   2.   The method of claim 1 further comprising using the unicast address for the information object

2   as an anycast address.

1   3.   The method of claim 1 wherein the request is received at an information object repository

2   selected without regard as to whether the information object is actually stored at the information

3   object repository.

1   4.   The method of claims 3 further comprising instructing the selected information object

2   repository to obtain a copy of the information object.

1   5.   The method of claim 3 wherein the information object repository is selected according to

2   specified performance metrics.

1   6.   The method of claim 5 wherein the performance metrics comprise one or more of: average

2   delay from the selected information object repository to a source of the request, average processing

3   delay at the selected information object repository, reliability of a path from the selected

4   information object repository, available bandwidth in said path, and loads on the selected

5   information object repository.

1   7.   An computer system configured to map a uniform resource locator (URL) for an information

2   object to a network layer unicast address in response to a request for an information object at the

3   URL.

4   8.   The computer system of claim 7 being further configured to use the unicast address as an

5   anycast address.

1   9.   A network, comprising:

2   at lest one client configured to request an information object using a uniform resource

3   locator (URL); and

4   a computer system configured to receive the request for the information object and to map

5   the URL into a network layer unicast address.

1   10. The network of claim 9 wherein the computer system is further configured to use the network

2   layer unicast address as an anycast address.

1   11. The network of claim 10 further comprising an information object repository coupled to

2   respond to the request for the information object.

3   12. The network of claim 11 wherein the information object repository is selected without regard

4   as to whether the information object is actually stored at the information object repository.

1   13. The network of claim 12 wherein the information object repository is selected according to

2   specified performance metrics.

1   14. The network of claim 13 wherein the performance metrics comprise one or more of: average

2   delay from the selected information object repository to a source of the request, average processing

3   delay at the selected information object repository, reliability of a path from the selected

4   information object repository, available bandwidth in said path, and loads on the selected

5   information object repository.

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